

The following is a blog post published on 23/12/14 A.D. The post is regarding the surprise attempt by the then-leader of the then-party the Wildrose Party, of which I was a member, with the Progressive Conservative Association. The Wildrose Alliance had been formed out of the Alberta Alliance and old Wild Rose Party as an alternative to the Progressive Conservative party, which was growing stale and entrenched as part of the provincial political establishment. This backstab on the part of the Wildrose turncoats was one of the most angering events I have experienced in my involvement in politics, and I remained a Wildrose holdout member. The Progressive Conservative Association was at the time led by a man who could not fit the image of a self-serving, mildly-condescending banker any better, whose dismissive attitude towards his opponents in the leaders' debates, in my opinion, ultimately lost him the election and moved the Progressive Conservative party to third-place in the House of Commons. His quick election night resignation proved all that we suspected: that he really had just taken the position in the first place on the possibility of enriching his friends and padding his own retirement fund. Thankfully, karma was not long catching up to him; he did not enjoy a long retirement after resigning, being killed in a private jet crash. But this article is not about him – rather, it is about Danielle Smith, the leader of the Wildrose Party, who demonstrated a remarkable lack of principle in favour of personal opportunism in her surprise defection to a party she had as leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition been tasked with holding to account.

The writer of this article is J.J. McCullough, a former commentator with the now-defunct Sun News Network, of which I was a devoted viewer and consider it to be one of my strongest formative influences on my philosophy. McCullough wrote this gem on the behaviour of libertarians, and I consider this article to be in my top dozen all-time favourites in how quickly, efficiently, and mercilessly he dissects, exposing the libertarian as being so individualist they lack the trustworthiness to allow them into positions of major importance in society.

I credit all of the below to J.J. McCullough. I hope you enjoy.

Summani

Danielle Smith's opportunistic defection is classically libertarian

Lawrence Auster, the prickly, far-right philosopher, once quipped that libertarians are like remoras—they have no loyalties or allegiances, only hosts.

In his American context, Auster was speaking of Ron Paul, the shrill, hopelessly omnipresent Republican presidential candidate whose interest in the good of his party—or even country—often seemed secondary to his desire to bask in debate stage spotlights, and spout, er, colorful opinions about how America brought 9-11 upon itself, or the genius of a bullion-based monetary system.

Canadian libertarians (many of whom idolize Dr. Paul) aren't much different. They relish the notion that their ideology, which worships individual choice above all else—culture, decency, practicality, you name it—is almost heroically unorthodox, and the result is an inflated sense of self-importance coupled with juvenile hostility to the constraints of a party system they consider beneath them. I remember attending a conference a while back in which some libertarian thought leader-type proudly declared he had worked for Stockwell Day and Marc Emery—you could all but see his eager eyes scan the audience for blown minds.

Danielle Smith was a doctrinaire libertarian first and foremost, and for that reason her rushed installation as boss of Alberta's Wildrose Party back in 2009 deserved a great deal more skepticism than it got. As a TV-talking head and

newspaper columnist, she inhabited a world that valued her idiosyncratic ideas above all else, and in making her leader, Wildrose tied its destiny to a woman with few political instincts beyond doing what satisfied her own intellectual predilections.

As an arch-social libertine who favored legalized prostitution, decriminalized marijuana, and abortion-on-demand, it was clear from the beginning that Smith possessed absolutely no respect or understanding for the reality that Wildrose—like any viable conservative party—would always possess an important social conservative constituency. Indeed, judging from her own words, she clearly found the faction irritating, offensive, and embarrassing, like a boil to be lanced.

Her constant haranguing of her party to loudly and publicly confirm it loved “the LGBTQ community” was a good example. In the aftermath of a provincial election the media concluded (without much hard evidence) Wildrose lost entirely on the basis of a single dumb candidate saying stupid things about gays frying in hell, Smith demanded her party membership “double affirm” its platform promise to “defend the equality of all persons regardless of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.”

The motion passed, though that was apparently still not good enough. This past November Smith demanded they double affirm that double affirmation, provoking a so-con revolt as the base rejected the wishes of a leader whose contempt for them was becoming undeniable.

It’s important to characterize Smith’s subsequent actions with accurate language. There is— in my mind, at least— a strategic and philosophical case to be made for merging Premier Prentice’s Progressive Conservatives with the party that has basically always existed as a breakaway faction of it, but this is not what Smith has done. Smith has simply abandoned a political party she has grown intellectually tired of, largely because it contains people who do not think exactly as she does.

Danielle Smith was always an ideologue, but ideologues are not always the unbending ramrods of popular cliché. Many are actually quite pragmatic, at least in the sense of being willing to compromise and sacrifice just about anything in the pursuit of their ideological goals, including promises, jobs, rules, and relationships.

In abandoning no fewer than three distinct democratic mandates—Wildrose boss, opposition leader, and MLA— Smith has calculated that her ideas, not her party's, not the Alberta conservative movement's, hers, can achieve greater effectiveness in closer proximity to the new premier. So that's where she now sits.

In other words, a new host has been found. I doubt it will be her last.

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